Mr. *HARRISON's*

SERMON

Preach'd at

Ratcliffe in *Leiceſterſhire*,

FEBRUARY 13. 17$\frac{19}{30}$

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THE Mutual DUTIES OF CLERGY and LAITY CONSIDERED;

As the MEANS of a

Succesful MINISTRY.

IN A

SERMON

Preach'd at

Ratcliffe in *Leicestershire*,

FEBRUARY 15. 17$\frac{29}{30}$.

By *THOMAS HARRISON*,
Vicar of *Ratcliffe*, and Chaplain to the Right Honourable the Lady COLEPEPER.

LONDON:
Printed for THEODORE SANDERS, at the *Bell* in *Little-Britain*, 1730. [Price 6 *d*.]

THE
Mutual DUTIES
OF
CLERGY and LAITY
CONSIDERED;
As the MEANS of a
Successful MINISTRY.
IN A
SERMON
Preach'd at
Ratcliffe in Leicestershire,
FEBRUARY 15. 17$\frac{29}{30}$.

By THOMAS NARES, D.D.
Vicar of Ratcliffe, and Chaplain to the Right Honourable the Lady Cowper.

LONDON:
Printed for THOMAS SANDBY, at the Ball in Ludgate-Street, 1730. [Price 6d.]

TO THE

RIGHT HONOURABLE the

Lady COLEPEPER,

Baroneſs-Dowager of *Throuſway*,

IN THE

County of *Lincoln*.

May it pleaſe your Ladiſhip,

TO accept of this plain Sermon, as a Token of my Gratitude for the Honour which

which you have conferred on me, and as a Proof that I cannot be unmindful of Your Ladiſhip, when at a Diſtance from You.

THE uncommon Piety and Devotion which I have obſerv'd in Your Ladiſhip, which ennobles a Perſon infinitely more than all the Advantages of Birth and Fortune; and Your great Concern that they who

who bear the Character of Miniſters may anſwer the Ends of their ſacred Office, aſſures me that the Subject of my Diſcourſe cannot be unacceptable to You.

THAT the ſame indulgent Providence which has diſtinguiſhed You in various Reſpects, may continue to ſhower down Bleſſings in abundance on

You,

You, shall be the daily Prayer of

Your LADISHIP's

Most Humble,

Most Obedient Servant,

Ratcliffe, Feb. 16. $17\frac{22}{30}$.

THO. HARRISON.

ROM.

ROM. xv. 29.

And I am ſure that when I come to you, I ſhall come in the Fulneſs of the Bleſſing of the Goſpel of Chriſt.

ST. PAUL informs the Chriſtians at *Rome*, that he had determin'd to come to them for the Exerciſe of his Miniſtry in that Place, Ver. 28. of this Chapter. He was deſirous of having ſome Fruit among them alſo, even as among other *Gentiles*; and therefore he was ready to preach the Goſpel to them, Chap. i. 13, & 15. And from his paſt Succeſs where divine Providence had caſt his Lot, ſince he had received the Apoſtleſhip, from the ſteady Reſolution which he ſtill maintained to exert himſelf to the uttermoſt in the Cauſe of Chriſ-

tianity, and from the comfortable Proſpect of his finding in the *Romans* a meet Diſpoſition for attending on his Miniſtry, he entertained a firm Perſwaſion that his Journey would be proſperous. *And I am ſure*, ſays he, *that when I come to you, I ſhall come in the Fulneſs of the Bleſſing of the Goſpel of Chriſt.*

WHAT we are to underſtand by the Goſpel of Chriſt, is very obvious, *viz.* The Diſcovery which God has made of the Method of our being brought out of a State of Sin and Miſery, of our regaining his forfeited Favour, and our being reſtored to his Likeneſs. This is fitly ſtyled * the *Goſpel*, *i. e.* good News, glad Tidings of great Joy, the beſt that were ever heard by the loſt Sons of Men; Tidings which occaſioned an univerſal Joy in Heaven, and which ſhould ever be entertained with the utmoſt Gratitude on Earth.

* Ευαγγέλιον.

AND this Revelation is the Goſpel of Chriſt: He is the great Subject of it, he being

being the glorious Perſon by whom we are delivered from the Wrath to come, and the Author of eternal Salvation to all the happy Men who ſincerely obey him. And 'tis the Goſpel which he firſt publiſhed; for the Law was given by *Moſes*, but Grace and Truth came by Jeſus Chriſt. God who at ſundry Times, and in divers Manners ſpake to the Fathers of the *Jewiſh* Church, by his Servants the Prophets, in the laſt Days hath ſpoken by his Son.

And when St. *Paul* aſſures the *Romans* that he ſhould come to them in the Fulneſs of the Bleſſing of this Goſpel, he intends hereby his being very uſeful, inſtrumental for promoting in an eminent Degree their Felicity, and their Purity, the great Glory of all religious Societies: For a Profeſſion of Chriſtianity will recommend us neither to God, nor to Men, on ſolid Grounds, if we are Strangers to that Temper and Behaviour which are eſſential to it, according to the Tenor of the Goſpel Inſtitution, founded on the Nature and Reaſon of Things. Nor will our

Profeſſion be advantageous to ourſelves, if we join not the Power of Godlineſs with the Form of it; becauſe the Kingdom of God is Righteouſneſs, as well as Peace and Joy in the Holy Ghoſt.

Moreover, the Propriety of St. *Paul*'s Expreſſion, when he calls a ſucceſsful Miniſtry the Fulneſs of the Bleſſing of this Goſpel, will appear if we conſider that his being thus made a Bleſſing to the *Romans*, muſt of Neceſſity be accounted an unſpeakable Bleſſing by him. Such was his Zeal for the Honour of the Redeemer, ſuch his Benevolence to Mankind, that he thought himſelf happy, whatever Reproaches were caſt on him, whatever Difficulties he encounter'd, whatever Toils and Labours he ſuſtain'd, while the Truths which he deliver'd were receiv'd in a becoming Manner, and he was inſtrumental for promoting true Goodneſs, ſincere Piety, and Virtue.

The Reaſon of my chuſing theſe Words, which I have briefly explain'd, for

for the Foundation of my Diſcourſe, you will eaſily apprehend. I would lead my own Thoughts and yours to that which ſhould be the great Object of our Deſires, at my Entrance on the important Work which God in his Providence has aſſigned me amongſt you. I have in a ſolemn Manner undertaken the Care of your Souls; I have engaged to do all that is in my Power to aſſiſt you in the great Affairs of the eternal World: And what ſhould be my Aim? what ſhould be yours? That ſince you have no continuing City here, you may be entitled to an Abode in that which is to come; that after you have for a ſhort Seaſon been Members of the Church Militant, waging War ſucceſsfully againſt the Fleſh, the World, and the Devil, under the Banner of your victorious Saviour, you may be admitted into the Church Triumphant, and may join the bleſſed Aſſembly of Saints and Angels, who ſhall for ever ſurround the Throne of the moſt high God.

WHERE-

I. WHEREFORE there are two Things which deserve our Attention:

I. THE Means which are to be us'd in order to the rendering my Ministry successful: And,

II. THE good Effects that we are encouraged to expect.

I. I am to discourse of the Means which are to be us'd to render my Ministry successful.

THIS may be consider'd with reference to my Province, and to yours.

First, WITH regard to my Province, I would remember,

1. THAT I am to be faithful and diligent in performing all the Offices of publick Worship.

I would be able to say, that I have not shunn'd to declare to you the whole Counsel of God, as St. *Paul* tells the Christians who met him at *Miletus*, that he

he had not, *Acts* xx. 27. As I ſhall never preach that for Truth of which I am not fully perſwaded, ſo I ſhall never decline the publiſhing thoſe Truths which I apprehend to be conducive to your Advantage.

And I ſhall think myſelf very happy in forming my Diſcourſes according to thoſe excellent Rules which a Right Reverend *Prelate has laid down in his printed Inſtructions for the Clergy of his Dioceſe.

* The Biſhop of *London.*

I would rather ſtudy Plainneſs than Politeneſs, at leaſt I would make it a Rule never to be departed from, to addreſs myſelf to you in ſuch Terms as may moſt eaſily be underſtood. I ſhall endeavour alſo to give the peculiar Principles of Chriſtianity their proper Place, not inſiſting barely on moral Duties; and theſe Duties, which are frequently to be inculcated, I ſhall always enforce by Chriſtian Motives: For if we omit them, if our Sermons are meer Diſſertations in moral

moral Philoſophy, as it is equally to be met with in Pagan and Chriſtian Writers, we withhold from you the beſt Helps for the Practice of Virtue: To recommend the various Duties of private and ſocial Life, from the perfect Example of our great Redeemer, from the Obligations we are under to make ſuitable Returns for his wonderful Love; that Love which inclin'd him to be made Fleſh, to be obedient to Death, even the Death of the Croſs: To remind you of God's declared Readineſs to aid and aſſiſt you; and of all the exceeding great and precious Promiſes by which he has encouraged your Obedience; (I ſay, to place in your View ſuch powerful Motives to lead an holy Life;) will animate you for the expected Services, and diſpoſe you with unwearied Vigour to flee from that which is evil, and to cleave to that which is good; to follow after Holineſs, without which no Man ſhall ſee the Lord. I would alſo make the Scriptures familiar to you, by introducing them as frequently as I can in the Proſecution of

every

every Subject. It has always been my Opinion, that Scripture Phraſes properly uſed, add much to the Beauty of a Sermon; that inſtead of debaſing, they raiſe the Style; and 'tis allowed, that all our Sentiments in Religion are of no Value, any farther than they are ſupported by the ſacred Oracles. Laſtly, I ſhall reckon it one Part of my Work, in the Concluſion of every Subject, in the moſt pathetick Manner to enforce the Belief of divine Truths, and the Practice of Chriſtian Virtues.

2. I am to watch over you. Miniſters are commanded to watch over their Flocks, *Acts* xx. 28. They are to watch in all Things, to reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all Long-ſuffering, *Tim.* ii. 4. We are never to ſay a diſagreeable Thing, for the ſake of venting our Paſſions; but when it ſhall appear neceſſary, with Mildneſs and Tenderneſs, with Prudence and Diſcretion, we muſt endeavour to rectify what we obſerve amiſs. We are not to have Dominion over your Faith,

but we are to be the Helpers of your Joy; and for this Purpose are to treat you as compassionate Parents, who with a watchful Eye observe the Conduct of their beloved Children.

And this Duty is enforced on us by the solemn Account which we are to render to the supreme Judge of our Behaviour towards you in our important Station; We are to watch for your Souls, as they that must give an Account; that we may do it with Joy, and not with Grief; for that will be both injurious to us, and unprofitable for you, *Heb.* xiii. 17. Nor can there be a more powerful Argument to excite the Ministers of the Gospel to be watchful, and the People to pay such a Regard to them as the Scripture enjoins, than this is, That we are all to appear before the Judgment-Seat of Christ, and to stand or fall, to be condemned or acquitted, at the Bar of an impartial Judge, according to the Deeds done in the Body, *i. e.* as the Series of our Actions

tions have been good or evil in this our State of Probation.

3. I am very ſenſible 'tis of equal Importance that I ſet you a good Example.

The Apoſtle St. *Paul*, and his Fellow Labourers could appeal to the People, that they gave no Offence in any Thing, leſt the Miniſtry ſhould be blamed; that in all Things they approved themſelves the Miniſters of God in much Patience, by Pureneſs, by Knowledge, by Long-ſuffering, by Kindneſs, by Love unfeigned, 2 *Cor.* vi. 3, 4, 6. And he thus addreſſes the *Theſſalonians*, 1 Ep. Chap. ii. 10. *Ye are Witneſſes, and God alſo, how holily, and juſtly, and unblameably, we behaved ourſelves amongſt you.* And we are exhorted to take heed to ourſelves, as well as to our Doctrine, that we may ſave ourſelves and them that hear us, *Tim.* i. 4, 16.

There is nothing more ſhocking than to hear one, who has taken on him the

Character of a Minister, declaring in God's Name the absolute Necessity of abstaining from Evil, and of living soberly, righteously, and godly, in this World, and to see that in his Life he treats his own Account of Religion as a mere Fable. St. *Paul* exposes this Conduct with a becoming Warmth, *Rom.* ii. *Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? Thou that preachest a Man should not steal, dost thou steal? Thou that sayst a Man should not commit Adultery, dost thou commit Adultery? Thou that abhorrest Idols, dost thou commit Sacrilege? Thou that makest thy Boast of the Law, through breaking the Law dishonourest thou God?*

Example is generally of more Force than Precept; and therefore if a Minister's Life be irregular, no Wonder that the People are addicted to sinful Indulgences. If he keeps not his own House in order, how can he expect a Decorum in his Neighbour's Family? If he discovers not that the Law of Kindness

and Benevolence, of Mercy and Compaſſion, of Courteouſneſs and Humanity, reigns in his Breaſt, how can he preſs others to live under the Influence of ſuch a Temper?

NEVERTHELESS all my Endeavours will be of no Service, unleſs I have your Concurrence; and therefore,

Secondly, I am to ſhew you what is neceſſary on your Part, that my Coming to you may be *in the Fulneſs of the Bleſſing of the Goſpel of Chriſt.*

1. You are (like the Royal Pſalmiſt) to love the Habitation of God, the Place where his Honour dwelleth; and you are to diſcover this by a conſtant and chearful Attendance on him in the Solemnities of publick Worſhip.

One Thing, ſays he, *have I deſired of the Lord; that will I ſeek after, that I may dwell in the Houſe of the Lord all the Days of my Life, to behold the Beauty*

Beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his Temple: And therefore he bewail'd his unhappy Circumſtance, when, thro' the Malice and Cruelty of his Enemies, he was baniſh'd theſe ſacred Courts: His Tears were his Meat Day and Night, while they continually ſaid to him, *Where is thy God?* And he moſt paſſionately wiſh'd to be recalled: As the Heart panteth after the Water Brooks, ſo panted his Soul after God: He expreſſed his Thirſt for God, for the living God, ſaying, *When ſhall I come and appear before God?* And he ſpeaks of the Pleaſure which he felt when the Seaſons of publick Worſhip return'd: *I was glad when they ſaid, Let us go up to the Houſe of the Lord.*

And as I would recommend to you a conſtant Attendance on the Services of the Church in general, ſo I would particularly preſs you frequently to communicate at the Lord's Table. I cannot with any Satisfaction think of adminiſtering leſs frequently than once a Month, our

our constant Method in the Churches in *London*; and I hope a Regard to your best Interest, will incline you so often to partake of this Royal Banquet, which the Prince and Saviour of the World has prepar'd for you.

And for those who are remiss herein, there is an excellent Admonition provided in the Service of the Church, to be read by the Minister when he sees Occasion; of which these Words are a Part: *Ye know how grievous and unkind a Thing it is, when a Man hath prepar'd a rich Feast, decked his Table with all kind of Provision, so that there lacketh nothing but the Guests to sit down; and yet they who are called (without any Cause) most unthankfully refuse to come; who would not think a great Injury and Wrong done him? Wherefore, most Dearly-beloved in Christ, take ye good heed, lest ye, withdrawing your selves from this holy Supper, provoke God's Indignation against you. It is an easy Matter for a Man to say, I will not communicate,*

communicate, because I am otherwise hinder'd with worldly Business: But such Excuses are not so easily accepted and allowed before God.

MOREOVER, that your solemn Acts of Worship in God's House may be acceptable to him, and profitable to you;

2. You must accompany me with your Minds, as well as your Bodies.

FROM Reason and Revelation we learn, that because God is a Spirit, we must worship him in Spirit and in Truth: His piercing Eye discovers the Secrets of our Hearts, and observes the Temper with which we approach his awful Presence.

IN Confessions of Sin, therefore, our Disposition should be humble and penitent; for the Sacrifices of God are a broken Spirit; *a broken and a contrite Heart he will not despise.* In offering our Petitions to the Majesty of Heaven,

our

our Desires should be eager and fervent; for the fervent Prayer of the righteous Man availeth much. In thanksgiving for Mercies received, our Souls should be filled with Gratitude to the kind Bestower of them; and, with the pious Psalmist, we should call on all that is within us to bless his holy Name. In hearing the Word of God, you should take heed how you hear, according to our Saviour's Advice: You are to attend to the Things which are spoken; to examine them by the plain and perfect Rule of the Scripture; and so far as they appear to be agreeable to that Rule, you are to fix them in your Memories, to treasure them in your Hearts, that they may have their proper Influence on your Conduct. And in the Holy Supper you are to feed by Faith, with Thanksgiving, on the Body and Blood of your crucified Redeemer, who has said, *My Flesh is Meat indeed, and my Blood is Drink indeed.*

3. You should make it your great Concern to act, in the Whole of your Behaviour, according to your real sentiments in Religion.

This St. *Paul* recommends by his own Example: *Herein*, says he, *do I exercise myself, to have always a Conscience void of Offence towards God and towards Men.*

And in social Life you are frequently to review that most excellent Rule of our Saviour: *Whatsoever ye would that Men should do unto you, do ye even so to them.* The Beauty of which Precept, for its Plainness, for its Fulness, for its universal Use in regulating our Conduct towards our Neighbour, so struck the Emperour *Alexander Severus*, that for the sake of it he tolerated the Christian Religion.

4. I must with a great deal of Earnestness recommend to you private Devotion.

The

The Services of the Church were not designed to exclude those of the Closet and the Family.

As, therefore, Christ hath commanded you, enter into your Closets, shut the Doors, and pray to your Father which seeth in secret, that he may reward you openly: A short Retirement, in a few proper Words to supplicate the divine Majesty, and to bless him for his Goodness, will be no Interruption to your secular Business, and it will greatly tend to promote a Life of Virtue and Piety.

And you will also find that the Devotion of the Family has its distinct Use; because herein we are directly led to exercise that mutual Love and Benevolence which ought to govern our Actions, while we express our Concern for the Welfare of each other, and share in the several Blessings which indulgent Providence has vouchsafed us.

5. The Scripture recommends to you the praying for your Minister.

Brethren pray for us, says St. *Paul* to the *Thessalonians*. I have not ceased to desire your Welfare, since I have taken the Charge of you: And it will be my daily Prayer to God that he would abundantly bless you; and may I not reasonably expect you will concur with me in your Supplications, that I may be directed to the most proper Methods for doing you Service, and that all my Attempts may answer the valuable End proposed, that I may be so happy as to promote your everlasting Salvation.

II. Now the good Effects of these our Joint-Endeavours in order thereunto, we are to see under the Second General.

Your everlasting Salvation will be promoted, and it will be evident that *I am come to you in the Fulness of the Blessing of the Gospel of Christ*, if the preceding Rules are practised: For undissembled Piety will

will flouriſh amongſt you; the Love of God and of your Neighbour will be powerful Principles, viſibly appearing in the Series of your Actions: And thus you will be filled with thoſe Fruits of Righteouſneſs which are, by Chriſt Jeſus, to the Praiſe and Glory of God the Father: Thus we ſhall anſwer the great Deſign of our Saviour's Undertaking, of his Incarnation, of his Doctrine, of his Example, of his Paſſion and Death, of his Reſurrection, Aſcenſion, and Interceſſion, and of his appointing a Goſpel Miniſtry; The Devotion of the Church, of the Family, of the Cloſet, will be join'd with Sobriety and Temperance, with Juſtice and Fidelity, with Charity and Mercy.

And theſe are the Ornaments which are in the Sight of God of great Price. Gold and Gems, coſtly and glittering Apparel, great and pompous Names recommend us not to our Maker; but a Re-

a Resemblance of him in his moral Perfections, as strict a Conformity as we are capable of to the Example of his dear Son, who did no Sin, and in whose Mouth there was no Guile. And the honest, the humble, the devout, the hospitable Peasant deserves to be treated with Respect by Men, while the proud and profane Great-ones of the Earth are equally the Objects of Pity and Contempt. No Distinction in the Goods of Fortune can make an Exception to King *Solomon*'s Remark, *That the Righteous is more excellent than his Neighbour.*

And as these are the Ornaments which at present will recommend you to the Esteem of your Maker, and of all intelligent Beings, who judge according to the Rules of Reason, so these Ornaments alone you can carry away with you into the eternal World. Had you Royal Apparel for your Bodies instead of plain, yet neat Attire,

Death

Death would ſoon diſrobe you: But the Garments of Righteouſneſs will ſtill cover you, and at the Seaſon of your Diſſolution they ſhall be cleanſed from every Spot, that you may ſhine in them like the Angels of Heaven, and be admitted into their bliſsful and triumphant Society.

THEN your lowly Cottages ſhall be exchanged for a lofty Palace, a Building of God, an Houſe not made with Hands, eternal in the Heavens: Your coarſe and homely Fare, which nevertheleſs ſatisfies the Cravings of Nature, and is more healthful than the greateſt Delicacies, ſhall be exchanged for Angels Food, and you ſhall drink of thoſe Rivers of Pleaſure which will flow at the Right Hand of the Moſt high for evermore. You ſhall engage in the nobleſt Services, and feel the moſt refin'd Pleaſures, through endleſs Ages.

Which

Which God of his infinite Mercy grant, for the ſake of his dear Son; to whom, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, be aſcribed all Honour, Power, Might, Majeſty, and Dominion, henceforth and for evermore. Amen.

FINIS.